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LEGAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT

Office of the City Attorney


100 North Appleton Street

Appleton, WI 54911

Phone: 920/832-6423

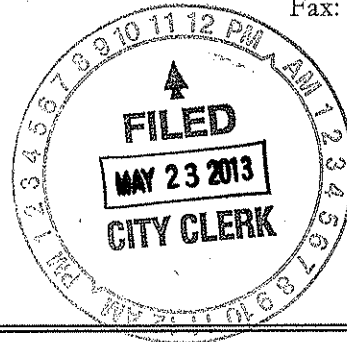
Fax: 920/832-5962

TO: Members of the Common Council

FROM: James P. Walsh, City Attorney 

DATE: May 22, 2013

RE: Vacancy in Office



I have been asked to advise the Common Council on the procedure to be followed for filling the position of alderperson should a member resign or cease to be a resident of the district in which they reside. The question arises in the context Alderperson Mettille's indication to the Council that he would be leaving his position in the near future.

The response to this request is dictated by the provisions of the Wisconsin Statutes. If an alderperson resigns or ceases to be a resident of the district from which they are elected, the position of alderperson for that district is considered vacant. Wisconsin Statutes §17.03. This point is indicated to clarify that the statutory provisions for filling a vacancy come into play rather than addressing a situation where an alderperson is "absent".

Vacancies in the office of alderperson are addressed in §17.23 of the Wisconsin Statutes. The City of Appleton is a city of the second class, as that term is defined in §62.05 of the Wisconsin Statutes. This classification relates to the population of the municipality. In cities of a second class, such as the City of Appleton, a vacancy in the office of alderperson is filled by appointment by the Common Council. The person appointed by the Council shall hold that office until a successor is elected and qualified. §17.23(1)(a). Because the vacancy in the position has occurred prior to December 1, a successor is to be elected on the first Tuesday in April of next April. In other words, there will be a special election next April, April of 2014, to fill Alderperson Mettille's position. That election will be for the balance of Alderperson Mettille's term. A person so elected shall serve until April of 2015 at which time the position will again be up for election to a regular term.

In the alternative, the Common Council could order a special election be held prior to next April. In that case, the person so elected would serve out the remainder of Alderperson Mettille's term and not be required to stand for reelection in 2014, but would again be up for reelection in 2015. If the Council orders a special election prior to next April, the election would be held in one district only, and it is estimated by the City Clerk's Office that the cost of such an election would be between \$5,800 and \$6,400.

The Council should be aware that there is also a provision in Wisconsin Statutes §8.50, that the date for special elections shall not be less than 62 nor more than 77 days from the date of the Council ordering that such an election be held.

James P. Walsh
City Attorney

Ellen Totzke
Deputy City Attorney

Christopher R. Behrens
Assistant City Attorney

Stacy Doucette
Assistant City Attorney

Members of the Common Council

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In summary, the Council could leave the position vacant until an election is held. The Council could choose to appoint a successor until such an election is held. The Council can also dictate if the position shall be filled by a special election, sooner than April 2014.

This is a brief outline of the process to fill the seat anticipated to be vacated by Alderperson Mettillie. If you have any questions in this regard or would like more detail of the process, please feel free to contact me.

JPW;jls